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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TAIPEI 003085

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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PENTAGON'S REPORT ON PRC
MILITARY POWER

11. Summary: The Taipei dailies gave significant coverage July 21 to the Pentagon's annual report on the military power of the People's Republic of China (released Tuesday in DC). All the major Chinese-language newspapers in Taiwan reported on the contents of the report on their front and first few pages but approached the topic from different angles. The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran a banner headline on its front page that read: "United States: China does not yet have the ability to attack Taiwan. The newspaper also carried a news story on the third page with the headline: "The United States informed Taiwan before it publicized the report on China's military power." The sub-headline added: "Taiwan and the United States have smooth communication channels. Taiwan will soon finalize its National Security Report, which will help to form a big international strategy of joint defense." The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" printed on its front page a story with the headline: "The United States estimates that China dares not attack Taiwan rashly." Both the centrist "China Times" and pro-unification "United Daily News" carried similar headlines on their front pages that said the Pentagon report shows that the balance of power in the Taiwan Strait is tilting toward Beijing.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" editorial used the Pentagon report as evidence that Taiwan needs to pass the special arms procurement bill currently stuck at the Legislative Yuan. A "China Times" commentary said the report indicated that the United States is very concerned about China's military threat. A "Taiwan Daily" editorial said the report shows that China's warmongering is not merely an attempt to intimidate Taiwan but is also meant to be a show of force for the United States and its allies in the region. Chinese Council for Advanced Policy Studies Secretary-General Andrew Yang noted in an op-ed piece in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" that the Pentagon report suggests that "time" has become the most important factor for Washington, Beijing and Taipei in terms of their military buildup and combat readiness. An editorial of the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," however, said in the face of China's military threat, Taiwan must not count so heavily on the aid of its allies and should acquire the means to defense itself effectively. End summary.

A) "Can the Opposition Parties Continue to Boycott the Arms Procurement Budget? - The Alertness One Should Have from the Pentagon's `2005 Annual Report on PRC's Military Power"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 800,000] said in an editorial (7/21):

". Therefore, whether China will use a hard or soft strategy against Taiwan, the way for Taiwan to defend itself is to strengthen its national defense and psychological defense. However, the most worrisome [thing] is that Taiwan's defensive capabilities are clearly declining, and there is the trend of Taiwan's reducing and China's increasing military powers, [while] the opposition parties still boycott the arms procurement legislation without considering the security and well-being of Taiwan's 22 million people. Psychological defenses can break China's soft strategy. But as for its hard strategy, we must rely on powerful national defense to deter the enemy's rash moves. Lien Chan is stepping down. The Pan-Blue Camp's KMT Chairman-elected Ma Ying-jeou and Legislative Yuan President Wang Jin-pyng should give up the boycott strategy and promote the adoption of the arms procurement legislation as early as possible. Or else, does this small group of Pan-Blue politicians want Taiwan's armed forces to fight against the Chinese hegemony and defend our country by using `bamboo poles and kitchen knives' [primitive weapons]?"

B) "The United States Is Worried About China's 'Non-peaceful' Rise"

Journalist Chi Le-yi wrote in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 600,000] (7/21):

"It is a little surprising that the 'Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China' released by the United States describes China as very frightening. The report states that China's threat is not only aimed at Taiwan, but also at regional security. Even the United States itself needs to be careful. China's 'non-peaceful' rise is pressuring the United States so hard that it seems that the United States will soon become breathless.

"'Is China an enemy or a friend?' This is a vital proposition for long-term U.S. observations of China's developments. However, there has not been any definite conclusion. In 2002, President Bush released the 'National Security Strategy' report, which described China as 'a potential great power in an internal transitional period.' The United States was then quite confident in those developments and looked forward to reaching a consensus with China on relevant global affairs. Now the general pictures of the U.S. and Chinese situations have not changed. But its worth pondering over the intention for the United States to have stepped up its emphasis on the 'China threat' theory. ."

C) "The Whole World Has Seen That China's Warmongering Is Not Only Meant to Intimidate Taiwan but also to Make a Show of Force to the United States and Its Allies in the Asia-Pacific Region"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] editorialized (7/21):

". Judged by this [i.e. the Pentagon's annual report on the PRC's military power], China's active strengthening of its military modernization in recent years was not merely meant to intimidate Taiwan but also an attempt to make a show of force for the United States and its allies in the Asia-Pacific region. This newspaper believes that while seeking to befriend the Beijing government to jointly daunt North Korea's nuclear weapons proliferation, Washington must not lower its guard against China's unscrupulous moves to expand its military buildup. .

". In particular, given the fact that the globalizing economic system has helped many Chinese people create their fortunes and improve their living standards, it will be very difficult for the Beijing government to convince its people to support its attack against Taiwan. This newspaper believes that Taiwan businessmen all over China should exercise their relationships and influence to convey to the Chinese people the universal values of viewing economic development and peace as top priorities. The ruling and opposition parties in Taiwan, on the other hand, must bear in mind a bigger picture of the [world] situation and the principle of 'competition better than conflicts,' so that Beijing will not get a wrong message and mistakenly believe that it can patronize the 'pro-China' power in Taiwan. Moreover, the international community, including the EU, should not unrealistically expect that the Chinese government would resolve the cross-Straits issue via 'peaceful dialogue.' The international community should engage itself in a pragmatic understanding and identification of Taiwan's strategic position in an attempt to maintain peace in the Asia-Pacific region and not let it be sabotaged by China's military expansion."

D) "Messages Manifested by the Report on PRC's Military Power"

Andrew Yang, Secretary-General of the Chinese Council for Advanced Policy Studies, commented in an op-ed piece of the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 500,000] (7/21):

". When compared with the [Pentagon's] reports released in previous years, this year's report on the PRC military power carried a few characteristics:

"First, the wording [in this year's report] in describing the PRC's strategic intentions and military strength is more precise; there is hardly any ambiguous or speculative phrasing. On the surface, the Pentagon emphasized that its data collection of the PRC military intelligence was incomplete, but the report itself revealed that the United States has managed to obtain accurate knowledge of the PRC military intelligence.

The [U.S.] intention to contest [with China] privately can be found between lines [in the report].

"Second, it is noteworthy that the United States clearly believes that the PRC will seek to fight and win short-duration, high-intensity conflicts across the Taiwan Strait, and that the PRC's objective is to prevent Taiwan's independence and to prevent possible intervention [in China-Taiwan problems] by the United States. In other words, the PRC has an obvious target in mind when proceeding with its military buildup. [It is evident that] the biggest variable for military attacks is `time,' and `time' has thus become the most important factor for Washington, Beijing and Taipei in terms of their military buildup and combat readiness.
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E) "Pentagon's Warning No Surprise"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] noted in an editorial (7/21):

". [People's Liberation Army Major General] Zhu's comments were typical of the Chinese military, indicating the haughty and bellicose nature of the PLA. The rising jingoism in China in recent years has gone hand-in-hand with its military expansion. This has warned the whole world that China's so-called `peaceful rising' is anything but that. It is no surprise, therefore, that a Pentagon report published on Tuesday in Washington affirmed the rapid pace of China's military expansion. .

"The threat that China now poses is an issue that Taiwan and its neighbors need to resolve. In fact, it concerns countries around the world. The EU certainly must take a more responsible attitude in its considerations over whether to lift its arms embargo on China. It should stop focusing on the commercial benefits of lifting the ban and do the responsible thing to help ensure regional peace in Asia and the rest of the world.

"As for the pan-blue camp, its members have simply buried their heads in the sand as far as China's military threat is concerned. Although they have long refused to face reality, hopefully pressure from the US and other nations will convince its leaders to greenlight passage of the long-delayed special arms purchase bill.

"In the face of China's military threat, Taiwan has no choice but to acquire the means to defend itself effectively. It must not always count so heavily on the aid of its allies."

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